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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 ANKARA 002293

SIPDIS

STATE FOR SA/FO - AMB. TAYLOR; JCS FOR J5 COL SCHRADER

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TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [TU](#) [AF](#)

SUBJECT: AFGHANISTAN: MFA/TGS TO RECOMMEND TO PM THAT THEY ESTABLISH PRT IN TAKHAR

(U) Classified by Deputy Chief of Mission Robert Deutsch.  
Reasons: 1.5 (B and D).

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SUMMARY  
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1. (C) MFA and TGS will recommend to PM Erdogan that Turkey establish a PRT in Takhar province in northeastern Afghanistan. The recommendation will also include a request for funding for the Turkish helicopters for ISAF, and a briefing on the possibility that the HRF in Istanbul may replace the Eurocorps in Afghanistan in February 2005. The Turks are no longer interested in Baghlan province. If the PM concurs, the GOT will inform the PRT ESC in Kabul. Afghan MOI Jalali reportedly told members of the MFA/TGS team during their recent visit to Afghanistan that he would support a Turkish-led PRT in either province. The PRT ESC reportedly did not make a decision on Turkey's PRT proposals. The Turks continue to receive mixed and conflicting messages from the various actors (the Afghans, SHAPE, ISAF on the ground in Kabul, and Germans) regarding their PRT proposals. End summary.

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RECON VISIT TO AFGHANISTAN: TAKHAR "YES," BAGHLAN "NO"  
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2. (C) MFA DDG for South Asian Affairs Aydin Evirgen (who led the GOT's April 9-16 recon visit to Afghanistan related to Turkey's desire to establish a PRT there) told deputy pol-mil counselor April 20 that the MFA and TGS intend to recommend to PM Erdogan next week (April 26-30) that Turkey establish a PRT in Takhar province. Evirgen cited a number of reasons for the decision, including:

--Logistics: There is an airstrip in Konduz that the Germans use to supply the German-led PRT. Turkish military talked to German officials in Konduz, observed the airstrip, and concluded it is suitable for setting up and sustaining a Turkish-led PRT in Takhar. The road between the airstrip and Takhar is in "good condition."

--AOR: The AOR in Takhar is smaller and more manageable than the AOR in Baghlan. The MFA and TGS officers believe the chances for success in Takhar are greater than in Baghlan.

--Reconstruction Efforts: A successful PRT mission in Takhar will increase the chances for success in other areas of on-going and future Turkish-led reconstruction (i.e. agriculture, health) efforts in the province.

--Existing Clinic: Turks have set up a clinic in the center of the province. Turkish doctors are currently working there. The presence of an existing clinic would alleviate the need of establishing a clinic as part of a PRT.

--Positive Relations: Turks have good relations with peoples in the region. MFA/TGS officials met with leaders/actors in the province to gauge likely reaction to a TU-led PRT. The reaction was mostly positive.

3. (C) Evirgen said that following their visit to Baghlan province, and discussions with Afghan officials (both in Kabul and in Baghlan) and with others in Kabul, the MFA and TGS will recommend to the PM that Turkey not establish a PRT in Baghlan province. Evirgen cited the following reasons:

--AOR: the AOR is large, mountainous and difficult to get around.

--Locals' Views: Regional leaders and actors with whom the Turks met were "not warm" to the idea of a Turkish-led PRT. On the overall security situation, they argued that they had "everything under control" and there was "no need for foreigners" to set up a PRT there. The Turks concluded that absent the support of the local population and regional leaders, they were unlikely to be successful there. They also did not believe they could meet the locals' expectations for big-ticket reconstruction projects (i.e. universities, hospitals).

--Netherlands: The Turks received "a clear message" from ISAF and the Dutch in Afghanistan that SHAPE prefers that the Dutch establish a PRT in Baghlan.

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MOI JALALI SUPPORTIVE OF TURKISH-LED PRT  
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14. (C) Evirgen said the TU delegation met with Afghan MOI Jalali before they visited Takhar and Baghlan provinces. Jalali reportedly was positive on Turkey leading a PRT in either Takhar or Baghlan province. He provided the Turks with security and escorts during their recon visits, and asked them to inform the ESC PRT of Turkey's position after the GOT makes a final determination. Evirgin said the GOT plans to inform MOI Jalali (through the PRT ESC) once PM Erdogan has made a decision.

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April 14 PRT ESC MTG: NO DECISION ON TURKISH PROPOSALS  
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15. (C) Evirgen said that the Turkish delegation was not in Kabul on April 14 and therefore unable to attend the PRT ESC meeting. He said he had learned from NATO SCR Cetin (who reportedly attended the meeting) that ESC did not reach any conclusions on Turkey's PRT proposals.

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TURKS CONTINUE TO RECEIVE MIXED SIGNALS ON PRT PROPOSALS  
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16. (C) Evirgen said the Turkish delegation received a "different view from everyone:" SHAPE appears to be steering Turkey toward Takhar; LTG Barno toward Baghlan; other ISAF officials in Kabul argued that SHAPE's Stage 1 requirements had been met and encouraged Turkey to establish a PRT in a region identified by SHAPE as a Stage 2 priority; and, unlike the German MFA and MOD officials who attended the Berlin donors conference at the end of March, German officials working in the German-led PRT in Konduz said they had the entire AOR "under control."

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NEXT STEPS: MFA/TGS RECOMMENDATION TO THE PM  
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17. (C) Evirgen outlined the following time-line for Turkish action on PRTs:

--MFA and TGS will complete their reports this week on the recon visit to Afghanistan.  
--MFA and TGS (together) will recommend to PM Erdogan next week that Turkey establish a PRT in Takhar. They will request a "special budget" to set up and sustain a 75-person PRT. At this time, the MFA and TGS are not considering incorporating personnel from other countries into the PRT during its "initial stage."

--The recommendation will include a request from the Turkish military for \$1.5M to help cover some of the costs related to the Turkish offer to provide three utility helicopters to ISAF. Evirgen said this did not mean that TGS had abandoned the idea of working out an arrangement with Luxembourg for the latter to finance the deployment of the helicopters. Rather, he suspected TGS was seeking funding from the PM in the event that Turkey and Luxembourg were not able to reach an acceptable arrangement, and the Turkish military needed to come up with the funds.

--MFA/TGS will also inform the PM that NATO is "almost there"

in deciding to send the HRF in Istanbul to Afghanistan in February 2005 to replace Euro corps. Evirgen said he was surprised to learn during his visit to Kabul that the Turkish military had not yet informed the PM there was a good chance the HRF in Istanbul would be deployed to Afghanistan next year. The MFA urged (and TGS reportedly has agreed) to brief the PM as part of the recommendation on PRTs.

EDELMAN